

# Every Member Counts

**SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD** 



## November Family Focus

Mission: Service Member & Family Support enhances and empowers the lives of our customers with consistently exceptional service & support.

**Service Member and Family Support**

**Phone: 1-800-658-3930**

THE FOCUS IS FOR SERVICE MEMBERS & FAMILIES, VETERANS, RETIREES & SURVIVORS

IN THIS ISSUE

## November is National Military Family Month

Military Family Month was established in 1996 by the Armed Services YMCA, with the U.S. Government recognizing the occasion every year since. Each November, the President signs a proclamation declaring November Military Family Month, and with hundreds of thousands of service members deployed overseas, recognizing the daily sacrifices made by active duty, Guard, and Reserve military families has never been more important.

See page 2 for more information.



**Military Family Month**  
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**M-Day Retirement Event**  
Pages 4-5

Disclaimer: The information that appears in these page(s) or attached are intended to inform service members, veterans, retirees, survivors and their families of special offers provided and are not intended to constitute an endorsement by the South Dakota Army and Air National Guard, the United States Army, the United States Air Force, or the Department of Defense. It is strictly intended to be used for informational purposes only.

## White House declares all of November as Veterans and Military Families month

By: Leo Shane III, Military Times

As he has for each of the last two years, President Donald Trump issued a proclamation declaring all of November as a month to honor American veterans and military families in an effort to extend traditional Veterans Day celebrations.

In the message, Trump urged communities to "honor the service, sacrifices, and contributions of veterans and military families for what they have done and for what they do every day to support our great nation."

Veterans Affairs officials have events scheduled throughout the month to highlight military and veterans issues. Trump is also expected to take part in events to honor veterans on Nov. 11.



***Below is the text of the president's proclamation:***

The United States is a beacon of hope, freedom, and opportunity to people around the world. The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen who fight to defend our liberty embody courage, patriotism, and loyalty. These patriots safeguard the values that keep our great Nation strong.

During National Veterans and Military Families Month, we honor and express our deep appreciation

for these brave men and women and their families.

Throughout our nation's history, our military men and women have boldly answered the call of duty to defend our nation's independence and precious liberties, risking life and limb for their fellow Americans. At the inception of our Republic, General George Washington and his men struggled to keep the spark of faith and hope alive through the scourge of disease and the brutal winter months at Valley Forge.

One hundred and forty years later during World War I, American service members shed blood in the trenches of Western Europe, leaving a legacy of heroism and courage under fire at places like Belleau Wood and the River Somme.

Earlier this year, we commemorated the 75th anniversary of D-Day, when thousands of American heroes charged through a hail of machine gun fire and left their gallant mark on the pages of history. The courage of our men and women who served and fought during that war freed the world from the shroud of tyranny and ended the oppression of millions across the globe.

In the decades since World War II, Americans have remained at the vanguard in defending freedom around the world, and our service members, veterans and their families continue to spearhead this noble undertaking.

America's military men and women and their families are vital to the security and prosperity of our nation. We have a responsibility to protect and serve those who have made countless sacrifices for love of country.



As President Lincoln once said: "Honor to the soldier and sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country's cause. Honor, also, to the citizen who cares for his brother in the field and serves, as best he can, the same cause."

We also recognize the integral role our more than 2.6 million military family members play in supporting our Armed Forces and contributing to their mission. While our military men and women are serving at home or overseas, it is our duty to provide their families with the resources they need to thrive in our communities.

Accordingly, under my Administration, the Department of Defense has created programs for military families that support access to quality childcare and spousal employment and promote occupational licensure reciprocity between States.

We also recognize that our obligation to our military men and women does not end after their time in uniform. We are a nation that leaves no American behind, and that includes our veterans and their family members.



For this reason, I was pleased to sign into law the VA MISSION Act of 2018, which helps provide all veterans with access to trusted, high-quality healthcare. I have also made it a top priority of my Administration to address the tragedy of veteran suicide, establishing the President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide (PREVENTS).

The PREVENTS initiative will encourage a better understanding of veteran suicide and work across all levels of government and the private sector to implement strategies that will strengthen support networks for veterans and their families.

My Administration remains committed to providing our veterans and their families with the financial resources they have rightfully earned. Last year, we secured \$201.1 billion in funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) — the most in the history of the VA — including \$8.6 billion to support mental health services for veterans.

Additionally, I recently directed the Department of Education to discharge some types of Federal student loans owed by totally and permanently disabled veterans. This unprecedented action lessens the financial burden for our seriously wounded warriors who have sacrificed so much for our country, and it underscores the appreciation and undying loyalty of the American people.

Each warrior who fights for our nation, along with their families, has earned our eternal gratitude, and I ask that all Americans thank and support them. Together, we remain committed to fostering a national community of support for these brave heroes and their families.



**Register Online Today**

*\*No cost or obligation to participate*

**Troops to Teachers**  
PROUD TO SERVE AGAIN

South Dakota Representative  
Larry Broomfield  
605-393-5350  
LBroomfield.troopstt@icloud.com

**Troops to Teachers**  
[www.proudtoserveagain.com](http://www.proudtoserveagain.com)



**NOV. 2, 2019 | 1 PM**

**BHSU FOOTBALL GAME**  
**ATTENTION HEROES**

BHSU Athletics would like to invite all Veterans, Active Military Personnel, Law Enforcement, Firefighters, and EMS Personnel to the "Hero Appreciation Game" as the Yellow Jacket football team hosts Western Colorado University at 1 PM on November 2nd, at Lyle Hare Stadium in Spearfish. All Veterans, Active Military, Law Enforcement, Fire Fighters, and EMS personnel will receive (2) free tickets to the game when you arrive at the stadium. Just let the ticket staff know your status.

Persons with disabilities requesting accommodations for these events or for more information contact Colleen Wichter (605-642-4265, Colleen.Wichter@bhsu.edu) or Brock Brundson (605-642-4482, Brock.Brundson@bhsu.edu)

**Black Hills State University**



# Strong Bonds 2020



Strong Bonds is conducted in an offsite retreat format in order to maximize the training effect.

The retreat or "get away" provides a fun, safe, and secure environment in which to address the impact of relocations, deployments, and military lifestyle stressors.

## ***Strong Bonds for Couples***

18-19 January 2020 – Rapid City

## ***Strong Bonds for Singles***

15-16 February 2020 – Rapid City

## ***Strong Bonds for Couples***

21-22 March 2020 – Sioux Falls

For additional Information contact

Chaplain (COL) Wilson at

605-737-6009 or

[lynn.j.wilson.mil@mail.mil](mailto:lynn.j.wilson.mil@mail.mil)

## Crossroads Retirement Seminar

16 November – Camp Rapid, Bldg 802

Current Service Members 0800-1600

Retirees 1230-1600

Retired Pay,  
Tricare, Volunteering,  
Employment

Veterans Affairs,  
Federal Benefits,  
State Benefits

Every Member Counts  
SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD



MILITARY  
ONE  
SOURCE

TRICARE VA



CITIZEN SOLDIER  
FOR LIFE

ESGR  
EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF  
THE GUARD AND RESERVE



**See NEXT PAGE for Details!**

# New M-Day Retirement Event Crossroads 2019

SMFS has very Exciting News! We are rolling out a new program to better inform our retirees and those about to retire about the benefits and requirements of retirement. You may asking yourself, "Does this really apply to me?" Here are a few questions you can use to determine if it does.

1. Are you a retired Guardsman / Reservists?
2. Are you a Guardsman approaching retirement (i.e. have achieved 15 or more years of service)?
3. Are you a family member of a retired Guardsman or a Guardsman who is about to retire?

If you could answer yeas to any of these three questions, then this event is applicable to you!

Details of SDNG Crossroads events:

**Who:** Any retired or about to retire (as outlined above) Reserve Component Service Member or their family member.

**Where:** Camp Rapid, Bldg. 802 Theater

**When:** November 16th. For Currently serving, the event will begin at 0800 and for retirees, the event will begin at 1230.

**What:** SMFS will begin hosting quarterly events (Future dates are TBD) around the state to help folks prepare for, transition to, and thrive in retirement. While it is not as long as the Active Duty Transition Assistance Program (TAP), it is similar in topics.

The day will begin with information pertinent to the Service Members preparing for retirement. This will include topics such as Reading and understanding your RPAM and Survivor Benefits Plan, Retirement election Options, Tricare (focused on Tricare retirement option selections), LOD and VA Health Care, and Military OneSource benefits.

After lunch, we will focus on topics pertaining to all (both those preparing to retire as well as those already retired) an update on the "State of the National Guard", Survivor Outreach Services update, Transition Assistance update, Tricare update for retirees, Volunteer Opportunity's, Employment Support tools, and other benefits updates.

**Why:** We have three main goals.

1. To inform and/or update all participants on the benefits of retirement, how to register, and what to expect.
2. Provide a transitional services update. Allowing those who are preparing to transition (or already transitioned) put a name and a face with who to talk to about what opportunities are available.
3. Finally, offer the participants a way (Volunteer Opportunities) to stay connected to the Guard.

***There is no registration required.***

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to myself or Mr. Christian Johnson

605-737-6669 or  
[Christian.m.johnson.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:Christian.m.johnson.ctr@mail.mil)

Thanks  
QJ

QUENTEN J. JOHNSON  
MAJ, MI,  
Director, Service Member and  
Family Support  
South Dakota National Guard

OFFICE : (605) 737-6206  
CELL : (605) 391-2724





## MC&FP FACT SHEET

### History

*Military Family Month was first celebrated in 1993. The following year, President Clinton issued a presidential proclamation establishing National Military Families Recognition Day. Subsequent presidents have issued proclamations, and Congress has periodically passed resolutions designating November as Military Family Month.*

### Additional Information

#### Joining Forces

[www.whitehouse.gov/joiningforces](http://www.whitehouse.gov/joiningforces)

#### Military Spouse Employment Partnership

<https://msepjobs.militaryonesource.mil>

## Military Family Month

### Background

Each year in November, communities around the world observe Military Family Month. It is a time to celebrate the contributions of military families and convey to them respect and appreciation for the sacrifices they make to support their service members. Military communities typically organize special events to recognize their local military families.

### Highlights

- During Military Family Month, we honor and thank military families for their sacrifices and dedication to our country.
  - They face the dangers of combat and separation during holidays and life milestones with courage and poise.
  - As part of the Family Readiness System, they strengthen the military community by volunteering as family readiness volunteers and ombudsmen, providing support to others when they need it most.
  - They serve as a beacon of hope for those who have been wounded in service, supporting their journey to recovery.
  - They bravely cope with the loss of troops who have made the ultimate sacrifice and keep their memory alive.
- During Military Family Month, we acknowledge our collective responsibility to honor and support the family members of military personnel, who also serve.
- We owe each day of security and freedom that we enjoy to the members of our armed forces, veterans, the fallen and their families.
- As we approach the season of gratitude, consider ways that you can honor and thank the military families in your community.





# VETERAN STAND DOWN & RESOURCE FAIR



**November 5, 2019**  
**10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**  
**Rapid City**  
**Rushmore Plaza Civic Center**



## SERVICES OFFERED

<b>Lunch</b>	<b>VA Benefits</b>
<b>Employment Services</b>	<b>Readjustment Counseling</b>
<b>Clothing</b>	<b>Housing Referrals</b>
<b>Legal Assistance</b>	<b>Much More!</b>

\* Please bring a copy of your DD214, dependent information, and identification to the event. Documentation is needed so we can fully serve you and your needs.

For questions contact VA Black Hills:  
Jamison Hild at: 605-490-8587

**VA**

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Veterans Health Administration  
Black Hills Health Care System





**2019 Veteran's Christmas Tree Program**  
**Sponsored by the SDNG**  
**30<sup>th</sup> Year**

This program will provide Christmas gifts for the residents of the Veteran's home in Hot Springs

Currently there are 99 Residents – 79 Males and 20 Females

Staff will provide us with the resident's wish list. There is a \$50 limit and you are not required to purchase all items on the list unless you so desire.

Paper ornaments with the Residents wish list will be hung on the Veteran's Christmas Tree on the Drill Floor of the JFHQ Readiness Center (Bldg 420) around 1 Nov 2019. You can pick an ornament, buy gift(s), wrap gift(s), and return to the tree.

We will happily accept monetary donations. Please provide them to Tamra Sime or Rorie Gregor. (Checks should be made out to Elder Tree)

Gifts must be returned to the tree NLT 9 December 2019.

Gifts will be delivered to the Veteran's Home 14 December 2019

Please let Tamra or Rorie know if you are interested in helping deliver the gifts on December 14<sup>th</sup> – Families are invited to come – The SDNG is the only group that joins the residents for the Christmas Party.

Contacts for this event are  
Tamra Sime – [tamra.m.sime.mil@mail.mil](mailto:tamra.m.sime.mil@mail.mil)  
605-737-6212 (w) / 605-431-3527 (c)  
Rorie Gregor – [rorie.i.gregor.mil@mail.mil](mailto:rorie.i.gregor.mil@mail.mil)  
605-737-6120





# PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



The state of your physical and behavioral health can keep you looking and feeling your very best or drag you down into hopelessness. The benefits and resources associated with physical and mental health and well-being can help you stay healthy and happy, inside and out.

- **Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Coverage**

Your TAA can assist you in applying for your benefits through the VHA who will determine your eligibility based on deployment history, LOD injury or illness, and active duty dates of service.

- **Transitional Assistance Management Program (TAMP)**

Provides 180 days of premium-free transitional health care benefits after regular TRICARE benefits end.

- **TAMP and TRICARE**

If you qualify for TRICARE, you can purchase it for you and/or your family upon TAMP termination. You'll need to apply within 60 days of the last day of TAMP to ensure your TRICARE benefits aren't interrupted.

- **Dental and Vision Programs**

Under the Active Duty Dental Program, your coverage ends at separation. As a guard and reserve member, you may purchase a dental/vision program(s) during FY 18 under the FEDVIP program.

- **Veterans Pension**

Helps veterans and their families cope with financial challenges by providing supplemental income. It is a tax-free monetary benefit payable to low-income wartime veterans.

- **Vet Centers** provide confidential, non-reportable counsel to you and your family. They serve as a key link between the veteran and other services.

- **State and Local Healthcare and Mental Health Services**

Contact your TAA for local resources.

- **VA Health Care and VA Dental Care**

The VA provides a medical benefits package that is available to enrolled veterans on a priority level based on income and service. Dental treatment is limited to those with high percentage and 100% disability.

**Christian Johnson**  
 South Dakota  
 Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA)  
 Federal Contractor

Office: 605-737-6669  
 Cell: 605-519-3755  
 christian.m.johnson.ctr@mail.mil



Disclaimer: Military/State and Veteran Benefits are likely to change without advanced notice. For the most up to date Benefits Information and assistance; always contact your local Transition Assistance Advisor to receive the latest information about the benefits you've earned, based on your individual service.

Find your local TAA:  
<https://www.jointservicessupport.org/WS/>

*"He who has health, has hope; and he who has hope, has everything."*

**Thomas Carlyle**



taahealthy.com

# South Dakota State Veteran's Benefits

## South Dakota Veteran Housing

**Program:** The South Dakota Veterans Home is located in Hot Springs. To be eligible for admission, veterans must be an honorably discharged resident of South Dakota, or the spouse or widow of such a veteran, be ambulatory and able to care for self and living area.

In the case of a married couple, the spouse of the veteran must be admitted with the veteran, unless the veteran is institutionalized, in order to be able to reside at the Home. Costs are based on income.

## Property Tax Exemption for Veterans and Their Widow or Widower:

Dwellings or parts of multiple family dwellings which are specifically designed for use by paraplegics as wheelchair homes and which are owned and occupied by veterans with the loss, or loss of use, of both lower extremities, or by the unremarried widow or widower of such veteran, are exempt from taxation.

The dwelling must be owned and occupied by the veteran for one full calendar year before the exemption becomes effective. For purposes of this statute, the term "dwelling" generally means real estate in an amount not to exceed one acre upon which the building is located.

In addition veterans that have been rated as permanently and totally disabled as the result of a service connected disability may be eligible for up to \$100,000 of their property value to be exempt from property taxes.

## Property Tax Exemption for Disabled Veterans:

Up to \$100,000 of the full value of a home that is owned and occupied by a permanently and totally disabled veteran is exempt from taxation. The surviving spouse may also be eligible.

## South Dakota Veterans Bonuses:

South Dakota currently offers a bonus of up to \$500 for current or former eligible members of the Armed Forces who were legal residents of the state for no less than six months immediately preceding their period of active duty and who meet certain criteria during one or more of the following periods:

- August 2, 1990 to March 3, 1991 – All active service counts for payment.
- March 4, 1991 to December 31, 1992 – Only service in a hostile area qualifying for the Southwest Asia Service Medal counts for payment.
- January 1, 1993 to September 10, 2001 – Only service in a hostile area qualifying for any United States campaign or service medal awarded for combat operations against hostile forces counts for payment.
- September 11, 2001 to a date to be determined – [OIF/OEF] All active service counts for payment.

**Free Tuition for Veterans:** Certain veterans are eligible to take undergraduate courses at a state university without the payment of tuition provided they are not eligible for educational payments under the GI Bill or any other federal educational program.

Eligible veterans may receive one month of free tuition for each month of "qualifying service" with a minimum of one, up to a maximum of four, academic years. Qualifying service is defined as: the amount of time served on active duty between the beginning and ending dates of the particular period of conflict or hostilities during which the veteran earned eligibility for this program.

**Free Tuition for Children of Veterans Who Die During Service:** Children who are under the age of 25, are residents

of South Dakota, and whose mother or father was killed in action or died of other causes while on active duty, are eligible for free tuition at a state supported school, if the deceased parent was a bona-fide resident of this state for at least six months immediately preceding entry into active service.

SDDVA form E-12 "Application for Free Tuition at State Supported Institutions" is available at the schools' financial aids, veterans representative or registrars offices or, they can be obtained from the Division of Veterans Affairs.

**Free Tuition for Dependents of POW's and MIA's:** Children and spouses of prisoners of war, or of persons listed as missing in action, are entitled to attend a state supported school without the payment of tuition or mandatory fees provided they are not eligible for equal or greater federal benefits.

SDDVA form E-12 "Application for Free Tuition at State Supported Institutions" is available at the schools' financial aids, veterans representative or registrars offices or, they can be obtained from the Division of Veterans Affairs.

**Reduced Tuition for South Dakota National Guard members:** Guard members, who meet the requirements for admission, are eligible for a fifty percent reduction in undergraduate tuition charges at any state supported school for up to a maximum of four academic years or one program of study, approved by the state Board of Education, at any state vocational school upon payment of fifty percent of the tuition charges.

The receipt of federal educational benefits does not affect eligibility for this program.

## Free Certified Copies of Veterans

**Records:** South Dakota counties may not charge for certified copies of birth, death, marriage, adoption, divorce, guardianship or conservatorship



papers when such records are required in support of a claim against any agency of the federal or state government by, or on behalf of, a service member or veteran, or the spouse, surviving spouse or dependents of a service member or veteran.

**Burial Allowance for Veterans, Wives or Widows:** A payment of up to \$100 may be paid by the state to help defray the burial and funeral expenses of any honorably discharged veteran or the wife, widow or widower of a veteran when the estate, or immediate family, of the deceased is lacking in funds to pay the expenses. The veteran must have been a citizen of the United States for one year preceding entrance into military service or one year preceding the death. This payment CANNOT be made to another unit of government. The surviving spouse, or relatives, must furnish an affidavit to the C/TVSO that sufficient funds are not available for payment of the expenses.

**Headstone Setting Fee:** The state will pay \$100 towards the cost of setting a government headstone or marker at the grave of a veteran who was a resident of this state for one year preceding entrance into the military service or one year preceding death.

**Special License Plates:** A resident veteran owner of a motor vehicle who has a valid South Dakota driver's license and who signs an affidavit attesting to the fact that he or she is

an honorably discharged veteran having served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States, may apply for Veteran plates. The fee for the special plates is \$10.00 per set, in addition to registration fees. A \$5.00 mailing fee required for each set of license plates to be mailed.

No special plate renewal fee is charged, but registration fees apply. To see all categories [click here](#).

**Hunting and Fishing Cards for Disabled Veterans:** Certain resident veterans may receive a hunting and fishing card which is valid for four years. Upon purchase of an annual basic game and fish license, the card becomes the equivalency of a resident fishing license, small game stamp and habitat stamp until the expiration of the basic game and fish license. To qualify the veteran must:

1. Be rated as totally disabled from service connected injuries OR,
2. Be in receipt of the VA "K" award OR,
3. Have been held as a Prisoner of War OR,
4. Be in receipt of Social Security benefits because of a total disability.

**Free Admission and Reduced Camping Fees for Veterans:** Certain resident veterans may obtain free admission to any South Dakota state park and are eligible for a fifty percent discount on any camping fee or associated electrical fee. To qualify the veteran must:

1. Be totally disabled from service connected disabilities or,
2. Be in receipt of the VA "K" award OR,
3. Have been held as a Prisoner of War.

Application forms may be obtained from the local park manager or through the [Game, Fish and Parks office](#) in Pierre.

**Special Provisions for Handicapped Hunters:** Individuals who are missing an upper limb, or are physically incapable of using an upper limb or who are confined to a wheelchair may use a crossbow to take game birds and animals once they have obtained a disabled hunter permit.

A legally blind, legally licensed individual who possesses a disabled hunter permit and who is physically present and participating in the hunt may claim game birds and animals taken by a designated hunter in accordance with the license or licenses possessed by the handicapped hunter.

Applications are obtained from the Game, Fish and Parks office in Pierre or from a game warden.

**For more information on any of these programs Visit:** [the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs website](#)

# Your Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA)

Your **Transition Assistance Advisor (TAA) Program** serves Active and Reserve Component service members of **ALL** branches of the military **AND** Veterans who have dedicated themselves to serving our nation, often at great personal sacrifice. The program's principal role is to provide direction to Reserve Component service members so that they can secure all benefits, entitlements, and services earned through their military service with the compassion of someone who's been there.

You may not need assistance at this time, but you may have a friend or family member that could use some assistance.



Common services provided are:

- Requesting Military Service records
- Enrollment into the VA Healthcare
- Counseling on Education Benefits
- Supporting deploying and returning units
- Employment
- Tricare
- State specific benefits
- Navigating local, state and federal programs

Christian Johnson is the TAA for South Dakota and is a current service member in the SDARNG, an OEF-Afghanistan veteran, former full-time Soldier, education counselor and will put his skills and relationships to use to ensure your needs are met.

Contact your TAA today at 605-737-6669 or [christian.m.johnson.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:christian.m.johnson.ctr@mail.mil)

## November Family Focus

Service Member and Family Support  
South Dakota National Guard

2823 W. Main St, Rapid City SD 57702

1-800-658-3930



We also recommend that you like and follow us on [Facebook](#) as we continuously update new and exciting information.

Have suggestions of things you would like to see in a future issue of the focus?  
[Please contact us!](#)

Disclaimer: The information that appears in these page(s) or attached are intended to inform service members, veterans, retirees, survivors and their families of special offers provided and are not intended to constitute an endorsement by the South Dakota Army and Air National Guard, the United States Army, the United States Air Force, or the Department of Defense. It is strictly intended to be used for informational purposes only.